WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for measuring the amount of a preselected analyte in a sample comprising:
   (a) forming an immunological complex between the analyte and an antibody thereto;
   (b) reacting the complex with an oxidant-producing phagocytic cell or extract thereof; and
   (c) measuring the amount of oxidant produced by said phagocytic cells as an indicator of the presence or absence of said analyte in said sample.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said sample is a bodily fluid.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said bodily fluid is whole blood.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein said oxidant-producing phagocytic cells are present in the sample of bodily fluid.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein an activator is included in step (b).

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said activator is selected from the group consisting of zymosan, latex particles, phorbol ester, fMLP, opsonized zymosan, opsonized latex particles, complement and any combination thereof.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said analyte is indicative of the extent of infection or sepsis.

8. A method for measuring the amount of a preselected analyte in a sample comprising:
   a. forming an immunocomplex between said preselected analyte and an antibody

thereto;

b. reacting said immunocomplex with an oxidant-producing phagocytic cell in the presence of an activator; and

c. measuring the amount of oxidant produced as compared with that produced by a maximal amount of immunocomplexes between a second analyte and an antibody thereto in the presence of said activator as an indicator of the amount of said preselected analyte in said sample.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said sample is a bodily fluid.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said oxidant-producing phagocytic cells are present in the sample of bodily fluid.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said bodily fluid is whole blood.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein said activator is selected from the group consisting of zymosan, latex particles, phorbol ester, fMLP, opsonized zymosan, opsonized latex particles, complement and any combination thereof.

13. The method of claim 8 wherein said preselected analyte is indicative of the of extent infection or sepsis.

14. The method of claim 8 wherein said second analyte is the same as the preselected analyte.

15. A method for detecting in sample of a bodily fluid a preselected analyte indicative of the extent of infection or sepsis which comprises :

a. forming an immunocomplex between said analyte and an antibody thereto;

b. reacting said immunocomplex with an oxidant-producing phagocytic cell in the presence of an activator; and

c. measuring the amount of oxidant produced as compared with that produced by a maximal amount of immunocomplexes between a second analyte and an antibody thereto in the presence of said activator as an indicator of the amount of said preselected analyte in said sample of said bodily fluid.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said bodily fluid is whole blood.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said oxidant-producing phagocytic cells are present in the sample of bodily fluid.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein said activator is selected from the group consisting of zymosan, latex particles, phorbol ester, fMLP, opsonized zymosan, opsonized latex particles, complement and any combination thereof.

19. The method of claim 15 wherein said preselected analyte is selected from the group consisting of Gram-positive bacteria, Gram-negative bacteria, a fungus, a virus, a protist, a Gram-positive cell wall constituent, Gram-negative endotoxin (lipopolysaccharide), lipid A, and an inflammatory mediator.

20. The method of claim 15 wherein said second analyte is the same as the preselected analyte.